

Compton Bassett Matters

Edited by Councillors Barlow and Waite for Compton Bassett Parish Council

Compton Goes Green

As we look to improve traffic management and reduce the number of vehicles travelling through the village at speed, our advisors have indicated that the more attractive Compton Bassett appears, the greater the conscious and subconscious impact on drivers will be. What we need is for the village to be seen as being in possession of a visible heart and soul rather than viewed as merely a cut-through, linear road.

Hence the Parish Council is looking for input from any of you who may have suggestions for how we can create more of a central hub for Compton Bassett. Part of this enhancement would include the creation of green zones in the village where we could distribute trees, flowers and shrubs to not only improve the appearance of the village but also help impact positively on climate change.

Wiltshire has a target to reduce its carbon footprint to zero by 2030. This is something of an ambitious aim and each of the villages in the county is being asked what they might do to contribute to this objective. Here in Compton Bassett we have it enshrined in our Neighbourhood Plan that we will try to adopt a more sustainable approach to local governance and one of our early projects is to plant more trees in the area.

We are approaching the Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy Fund to solicit finance to create a green

in the centre of the village and intend working with the Village Hall Trustees to explore how we can create a nature hub and a village green. This will assist by not only helping support our sustainability agenda but also improve the area's current utilitarian appearance. Our aim is to impact on the psyche of drivers who see only a highway and not a rural haven.

We do hope that you will contribute to this project, want to get involved and tell us what you want to see by way of improvements. Please email:

parishclerk@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk

Julian Barlow

Precept increase

There has been a tax rise from the Parish Council which is appearing on Council Tax bills floating onto doormats this month. Based on a Band D house, the charge has risen by 75p per month.

Income from the precept contributes towards village amenities including signage, elements of road maintenance and funding work to improve road safety.

2021 Census

Sunday 21st March is census day. The survey of all the households in England and Wales, which everyone must complete on the day. This census is the first available to be carried out online.

Census information helps decide how services are funded in our area.

Local Council Elections 6th May

Thursday 6th May 2021 is the day that local elections are due to be held for local councils and police and crime commissioners.

Our COVID-secure polling station will be at the village hall as per usual. Alternatively, you can register for postal voting.

HGVs return!

Unfortunately, the recent week-long closure for road works, between the A4 and Hill's site at Lower Compton, led HGV drivers all the way around through Calne and into Compton Bassett from Hilmarton end instead of entering Hill's site from the Oxford Road (A3102). All because of incorrect signage! Hill's staff did their best to advise drivers of their error and also inform Wiltshire Highways of the problem. We did likewise throughout the week, and by sending photos of offending lorries (see one below).



Many HGVs trundled through the village, tree branches were removed and walkers and cyclists were alarmed.

SAVE THE DATE

To All Villagers!

Saturday 3rd July 2021

Late pm & evening

The White Horse Inn

Further details to follow

Ever thought of being a Parish Councillor?

Being a Parish Councillor is a great opportunity to work for the community and help decide how to meet the concerns of residents and what is best for Compton Bassett. Parish councils are the most local part of our democratic system and are closest to the public.



Jackie Weaver has no authority here... Compton Bassett Parish Council meetings have all been online over the last year.

How much time does it take up?

On average, a few hours a week; there are some Councillors who spend more time than this. Council meetings are held in the evening, every six weeks on Thursdays at 7pm in the Village Hall (or online currently, via Zoom). You may be asked to represent the Parish Council's views at other external meetings. In your first few months there will also be training for new Councillors, aimed at helping you find your feet and to learn what Parish Councils can and can't do.

What skills will I need?

Parish Councils benefit from diversity and we welcome interest from people of different ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Good communication skills, problem solving, and being a team player are essential skills. The most important thing is that you care about Compton Bassett and are willing to take an active role. All Councillors are required to abide by the Code of Conduct and by law you must register financial, business and other interests in the Parish.

Who can become a Councillor?

Anyone can stand as a candidate provided they meet the qualification requirements. You should:

- be aged 18 or over
- be a British, Commonwealth citizen or from an EU country

- be a registered elector
- have been resident for 12 months before the day of election/co-option – either in the parish or within 3 miles of the boundary, or occupied land or premises as owner or tenant, or had a principal place of work for 12 months.

Am I excluded from standing?

You cannot be a Councillor if you:

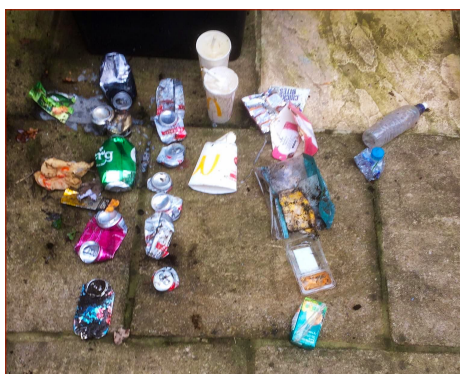
- have been declared bankrupt within the last five years
- have been convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to not less than three months imprisonment within the last five years
- have been disqualified under any legislation relating to corrupt or illegal practices.

If you would like to become a Parish Councillor please speak to any of our current Councillors or contact the Parish Clerk:

parishclerk@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk

Litter problem through village

From Freeth to Goodenoughs Corner, the amount of litter plaguing the village seems to have increased exponentially in spite of lockdown. Top offenders are Red Bull cans, Costa coffee cups and fast food packaging.



The results of just a few days lack of respect.

A big thank you to all those good villagers who have taken the time to go down there and pick it all up, again and again and again...

Telephone kiosk set to return



Pandemic shutdowns, shortage of spares and social distancing concerns have inflicted a much greater period away being restored than originally planned but at last the end is in sight! It's been in storage patiently awaiting its gleaming new coat of paint and the results look promising (see above). The restoration is being paid for by a kind donor.

Groundwork preparations for the base are underway and once its back in its new home near the bus shelter, we can start putting all the fittings back together.

It's planned for the kiosk to be a village noticeboard and information resource for visitors.

History archive

Work for the village archive has now begun on a new website which will contain everything that has been gathered over many years to do with the history of the village. It will take some time to put it all into an accessible format. We hold almost 500 photos of old Compton Bassett and many other documents, including census information for each house. Hopefully the website will be ready by summer 2022.

How lucky are we in Compton Bassett to have the glory of darker skies?

Very few places in the UK have been able to resist the insidious pollution of street lighting. Here however, we have been very careful to ensure that our Neighbourhood Plan includes the need to keep our light pollution as low as is possible.

Many people have told me how much light pollution increased when the bypass and its lighting were put into Calne, the glow in the sky impacting star gazing here. Nevertheless, we are still very lucky to have darker skies than most and we want to keep it that way! So please, if you have outside lights, only have them on when you need them and make sure that they are not unnecessarily bright, are angled down at the ground for your safety and not up into the sky to the detriment of our wildlife!

There are so many benefits to the darker skies at night time both for us humans and for wildlife. It was fantastic to witness those amazing meteor showers in early December.

For wildlife, we have many types of bat here: Common and Soprano



The common pipistrelle. It is the smallest and most widespread bat in England and munches on up to 3,000 insects a night!

Pipistrelle, Long-eared, Small Myotis, Serotine, Brandt's and Noctule are seven species recorded in recent bat surveys within the village. Bats are the only true flying mammals and are fascinating creatures. Numbers have dwindled massively and so bats are protected by law, protection from light pollution included. Lighting in the vicinity of a bat roost could have a catastrophic effect, causing the bats to remain in their roosts and perish. Many night flying insects are attracted to the lights, but some bat species (including long-eared that

we know live in roosts at Briar Leaze) avoid lights and so miss out on that potential source of food.

Please remember that we have many still trying to hibernate at present, you may not see them often just yet, but they are there and need the darkness to thrive. If like me you have an interest in bats, their habitat and welfare, you may like to join me as soon as we are allowed (due to COVID). When the bats have woken up, I intend to do a dawn or dusk bat walk with the guidance of someone from the Bat Conservation Trust.

In the meantime stay safe and enjoy our beautiful starry skies, spare a thought for the hibernating bats and other creatures and switch off your outside lights whilst you sleep!

For more information on bats and mammals or to find a local bat group, please have a look at the Wiltshire Bat Group's website: wiltshiremammals.wordpress.com

Jane Marshall
janem2020@btinternet.com

Take part in the great UK star count

How do we compare with the rest of Britain in terms of our night skies? We aim to find out with your help.

Take part in the CPRE (the countryside charity) star count. All you need to do is count the number of stars you can see within the constellation of Orion, the hunter. To find Orion, look for the row of three bright stars that makes up his belt in the middle of the rectangle. Count all the stars you can see to the naked eye inside the rectangular space shown in the photo. Please don't include the four corner stars though. You'll find Orion in the south-east at early evening and shining high in the south by mid-to-late evening (around 9 to 10pm).

Please contact Jane Marshall with your count. Tel. 760170 or email janem2020@btinternet.com



This photo, taken with an iPhone early evening on 10 February, looks southward over Compton Hill. It's fairly easy to spot the 3 bright stars of Orion in a line. The four corners of the rectangle are outlined for ease of identifying. Don't count the corners!

Compton Bassett House, USA



To understand why a house of the same name exists 3,500 miles away in the American state of Maryland, a brief potted history is needed.

In 1632 King Charles I granted a royal charter to Cecil Calvert, 2nd Baron Baltimore, for a new colony of some 12 million acres, to be named Maryland after his wife Queen Mary. It was originally intended to be a religious refuge for English Catholic settlers by Calvert's father, who had converted to Catholicism, but the province soon became overwhelmingly Protestant through immigration. Political power though, stayed precariously under a firm Catholic hand.

However, the real motivation for carving up new territory lay in the need to out-flank the Dutch who had their own ambitions in the region. Maryland was economically important for its tobacco, grown on large plantations and using Africans imported for slave labour. The Calvert family recruited Catholic and Protestant settlers alike, tempting them over with generous land grants. Life was very challenging, malaria and typhoid were rife, claiming so many that life expectancy was at least ten years below even that of New England. The lure was great profit from tobacco though this dwindled by the mid 18th century as supply overtook demand.

Fast forward to 1661 and a young Charles Calvert (the 3rd Baron B) arrived from England, the first of the Barons Baltimore to take personal charge of the colony.

Sailing with him was 20 year-old Clement Hill, born in Compton Bassett, Wiltshire to parents Richard Hill and Joanne Breach, who were also born and bred in the village. Any connection between Clement Hill and Charles Calvert is not known. In 1674 Clement married Elizabeth Gardiner, recently widowed and some fifteen years his senior. The marriage brought him into Maryland's higher society and within a year he became High Sheriff of St Mary's County. Further appointments followed and by 1685 he was Deputy Surveyor General and Councillor of State by Baron Baltimore.

Now enter Clement Hill Jnr (born 1670), nephew to Clement Snr and also a product of Compton Bassett. He arrived in Maryland at his uncle's behest in 1693, living with him for three years. Uncle Clement had no children and evidently took a shine to his nephew, as he later left him most of his wealth. Clement Jnr trumped his namesake in matrimonial conquest by marrying 16 year-old Anne Darnall in 1696, who happened to be a member of one of the most prominent Catholic families in the province. Into the bargain he became, somewhat distantly, connected to Baron Baltimore. Within three years, father-in-law Henry Darnall returned from England with a commission from Baron Baltimore for Clement Jnr to be Surveyor General of the Western Shore. He also received a 748 acre estate in the same year and immediately set about constructing a home, calling it Compton Bassett House in deference to one he had known in Compton Bassett, England. It's a reasonable assumption for it to have been our Compton Bassett House which was impressively aggrandised around 1670 and converted into a large and imposing mansion (demolished c.1933, leaving only

the stable block to be converted into the present house).

In 1771, the Maryland house suffered a major fire and was rebuilt in 1787; the photo top left of page was taken in 1936 after a wing was added in 1928. The appearance of the earlier house seems to have been kept, as an architect's drawing dated 1738 (below) shows.



Compton Bassett House, Maryland remained in the Hill family from 1699 until 1900 and is now owned by an historical trust and undergoing restoration. The house sits close to Upper Marlboro town, which was the heart of the tobacco growing region; until the late 19th century it was spelt Upper Marlborough but a postal clerk dropped the last three letters as it didn't fit onto the standard rubber stamps of the time.

The photo below shows the private Catholic chapel in the grounds of the house in 1933, built around 1779 and a unique surviving example in Prince George's County. It has recently been restored.



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Compton Bassett History Archive

Diane Zeitzen	Parish Clerk: parishclerk@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk
Pete Szczesiak	Chair, Calne Area Parish Forum, Hills Liaison Committee, Legal Duties, Neighbourhood & Farm Watch
Jane Marshall	Vice-Chair, CATG & Calne Area Board, Health & Well Being, Village Hall Rep, Road Safety
Peter Barnett	Hills Liaison Committee, Parish Steward Link, Village Hall Rep
Julian Barlow	Road Safety, Communications, Broadband, CATG & Calne Area Board, Neighbourhood Plan, Wildlife Trust Liaison
Tony Horseman	Calne Area Parish Forum
Charles Reis	Heritage, Neighbourhood & Farm Watch, Rights of Way Liaison
Laurie Waite	Communications, Neighbourhood Plan, Heritage, War Memorial, Website Liaison